

## Numbers 35:22 - 36:13 - Thursday, April 7th, 2011

- We weren't able to complete all of chapter 35 last week, so we'll start in verse 22 tonight, where we're learning about the six "cities of refuge."
- These cities of refuge were put in place as a place where a "manslayer" could flee to, and be protected in, until he was pronounced innocent.
- In other words, if it were discovered that the death was accidental and not premeditated murder one could be set free under certain conditions.

22 'However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, 23 or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing it at him without seeing him, so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, 24 then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments. 25 So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

- Verses 22-25 deal with the man who unknowingly and accidentally kills another man. He is to be delivered from death by the manslayer.
- Notice that he is to remain in the city of refuge where he had fled, until the death of the high priest, at which time, he could be set free.

26 But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, 28 because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

- This is saying that the one who fled was only kept safe if he stayed within the limits of the city of refuge. If he leaves, it could mean his death.
- He could only leave after the death of the high priest, in that he's saved by the life of the High Priest, and freed by the death of the High Priest.

- **LIFE LESSON #17: Stay under the spout where God's blessing comes out. If you leave the city of refuge, you're fair game to the enemy.**

- For those of you who were with us on Sunday mornings when we studied through the book of Acts, you may remember a similar warning.
- Paul, on a ship to Rome in the midst of a perilous storm, tells the terrified men on board that there will be no loss of life and all will be saved.

**Acts 27:30-31 NIV** In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. (31) Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."

29'And these things shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30 Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty.

- Woven into the fabric of these two verses is a very crucial principle, and one for which we would do well to take note of in its application to us.
- Here, God is once again establishing the testimony of two or more witnesses, as one witness is insufficient in judging a man guilty of murder.

**David Guzik** - "God is concerned about the murder of reputation, as well as physical murder, and commands Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19) - the same standard as for proving murder! Remember 1 Timothy 5:19 does not say "except from two or three gossips"; it says except from two or three witnesses. If a matter is false, it does not become true because many people hear it or many people repeat it."

31 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. 33 So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34 Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel."

- Here, God makes it clear that no amount of money can be paid to get someone off for murder, except if you're someone like O.J. Simpson.
- Furthermore, the murder was to be judged swiftly and severely in that he was to receive the death penalty, or justice would not be served.

- Be that as it may, and suffice it to say, this paints a beautiful scripture picture on the canvass of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- Jesus Christ is our City of Refuge! He is our High Priest! He is who we flee to, and are both safe and saved by His life and freed by His death.

**Hebrews 6:18 NKJV** that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

### **A SCRIPTURE PICTURE OF JESUS CHRIST**

1. The cities of refuge were a place where one could be saved from death

**Charles Spurgeon** - "No sooner had the fearful deed been done than the unhappy manslayer hastened at full speed to the nearest refuge, for the blood-avenger was sure to pursue him and demand life for life. Oh! that sinners would up and away to Jesus, their sole and sure salvation."

2. They were provided divinely by God Himself as a place of refuge for all who would come.

3. It was for any and all who would come, Jew and Gentile alike.

4. Everyone had access to these cities of refuge.

5. When one fled to the city of refuge, they were safe and secure.

**Charles Spurgeon** - "There he was safe, no avenging hand could touch him- Fair picture of the security of those who rest in Jesus, the refuge of guilty souls"

6. All six cities of refuge were made known to all.
7. The one who fled was only kept safe in the city by the life of the High Priest.
8. Freedom only comes vis-a-vis the death of the High Priest.

Charles Spurgeon - "We are not now under the restraints and conditions which were imposed upon a dweller in a refuge city: for our Great High Priest is dead, we are liberated unconditionally, we have no avenger to fear, but may possess our inheritance in peace. This, however, is only true of believers - are we all such?"

9. The cities of refuge were for one who was pronounced innocent.

Charles Spurgeon - "God provided no sanctuary for real guilt, murder was not winked at, else had the land become both polluted and unsafe. Mercy to murderers would be cruelty to the innocent. It was accidental or unpremeditated killing which here found shelter. The spiritual fact, however, far excels the type, for in Jesus, the real sinner finds pardon and safety."

**Another commentator had some very interesting insight, and I would like to close with it;** "The cities of the Levites were scattered through the land. ... The provision of cities for refuge is full of interest. The careful study of the purpose of these cities is recommended. Note especially that they were provided to give shelter for those who had killed a person unawares. The avenger of blood (Hebrew: \_goel, which means to redeem) pursued the person and the city of refuge gave shelter. The death of the high priest resulted in liberty for all who were in the cities of refuge. It was the signal that they could return to their possessions (verse 28). Israel's history may be easily read in this chapter in connection with the cities of refuge. The innocent blood shed is the blood of Christ. Blood guiltiness is upon the nation. They did it ignorantly, even as He prayed on Calvary's cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." They are on account of this blood-guiltiness kept out of their inheritance, and yet they have had their city of refuge and have been preserved till the time comes when they are set free and return to the possession in the land. And that will be when the Priesthood of Christ as now exercised by Him in glory ends, when He comes forth as the King-Priest to exercise the Melchisedek priesthood.

36:1 Now the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the chief fathers of the children of Israel.

- It's interesting that the last chapter in the book of Numbers would deal with a request that was originally granted back in Numbers 27:1-11.
- As we'll see here next in verse two, it concerns the security of the inheritance to the daughters of Zelophehad, because there were no sons.
- There's a reason why they bring this up again even though it was already a done deal, and it just so happens to be the lesson of the chapter.

2 And they said: "The LORD commanded my lord Moses to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters.

- It's important we realize that God had already agreed to this, and commanded Moses to give the inheritance to the daughters of Zelophehad.
- This brings up the question of why they bring up the matter once again, and why is it recorded here in the last chapter of the book of Numbers.

3 Now if they are married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and it will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

- Here's the first reason they bring this up, at this time, it's because they fear losing their inheritance when the daughters of Zelophehad marry.

4 And when the Jubilee of the children of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

- This is their second reason, and it has to do with the year of Jubilee, where once again, the inheritance of their tribe would be taken away.

5 Then Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying: "What the tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks is right. 6 This is what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.' 7 So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8 And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of the family of her father's tribe, so that the children of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. 9 Thus no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance."

- I find the solution to this problem most fascinating for a number of reasons not the least of which is the profound application it has to our lives.
- We'll see this come into sharper focus at the conclusion of this study, so be that as it may, these daughters have to marry men in their tribe.
- This would mean that if they married outside their tribe, they would most certainly lose their inheritance, and it wouldn't be kept in the family.

10 Just as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad;

- There's something here that we would do well to take note of before we complete this chapter, and with it this really boring book of Numbers :)
- Notice how the daughters of Zelophehad saw their need to heed the Word they heard. They simply did what God commanded them to do.

11 for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to the sons of their father's brothers. 12 They were married into the families of the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

- This is the result of obedience. An obedient life is a blessed life. If I remain obedient to God, then so too does my inheritance remain as well.

13 These are the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho.

- I can't think of a better way to end this chapter than to once again see a picture of the person of Jesus Christ as it relates to our riches in Him.

I like how one commentator summed it up; "The chapter explains itself. But what is the lesson? It is evident that the inheritance given by the Lord must remain with those to whom it is given. And this brought security and comfort to the daughters of Zelophehad. It brings security and comfort to our hearts when we consider that our inheritance in Christ can never be taken from us. It belongs to us and we belong to the inheritance. The same is true of Israel with its earthly inheritance, the promised land. Thus ends the wilderness book, a marvelous book, like every other portion of God's holy Word. May we remember in the study of this book, ... that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." May we pass the time of our sojourning here with fear, realizing our separation unto God, the priestly and Levite service which belongs to us till we reach our eternal inheritance.

**1 Corinthians 10:1-11 NIV** (1) For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. (2) They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (3) They all ate the same spiritual food (4) and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. (5) Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. (6) Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. (7) Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." (8) We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. (9) We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. (10) And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. (11) These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.